



A paper for GCOM360 :: User Interface Design  
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## UX and IA

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# GCOM 360

## UX, Visual Design and IA

*A website will contain text content, visual components and information made accessible by links and navigation. One challenge before the web developer is that of creating content which serves the needs of both the website owner and website user. The owner needs to make certain information available and the user needs to effectively get easy access to such information. Another challenge faced by web developers is content creation which serves accessibility needs of both end user and search engine. End users need to easily find what they are looking for while search engines need to understand the site layout so that the website can be indexed and found in a search query. Information Architecture seeks to bridge the gap between web design strategy and website owner needs as well as between UX vs. SEO considerations.*

### **Information Architecture**

In an ever changing and increasingly complex world of exploding information we need to develop a rational approach using new information. [Information architecture](#) (IA) describes a way we as web developers can attempt to create and organize information so that it remains both usable and findable. It suggests a process oriented approach to both the structure and design of information using strategies as the organizational methodology.

### **Understanding Users**

To better understand users, personas can be created to generate a profile of a potential user. Data for personas can be gathered by [a variety of ways](#) either through online surveys or in-person interviews. User profiles, user scenarios (projections based on the user profiles) and user cases (plotting of specific user event steps) can be drawn up to develop a website based on the user profile as one part of the overall IA web development scheme.

## **Integrating of information**

Web developers should provide clear steps to show the development stages as they proceed which can include:

- Proposal
- Review
- Revision
- Updated
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Revision
- Approved
- publish

## **Content Guidelines**

Web developers can greatly assist their clients when they specify content guidelines. This provides the client with the language used by the web development community in order to facilitate better understanding between client and web developer so that the web development process can go smoothly. Guidelines help ensure that the IA research goals are articulated within the client communication framework and implemented in the web development process.

Typical guidelines may include:

- Writing tone and language, including samples of common text strings
- Typography including font, color, and size and heading styles
- Use of brand or product specific to industry standard terminologies
- Content guidelines describing how each on-page CTA type is implemented

## **Content Mapping**

Web developers should stay on track by mapping each page or content block by answering three questions about each page or block created:

1. What is the need of the user?
2. How will the user find the information?
3. What is the most effective way to structure the information?

Content creators will keep in mind that there are proven methods for effective content structure such as the [Listicle](#), for example, to be included in IA strategy.

## **Evaluations and Feedback**

Continual evaluations of an IA design strategy will include [keeping in touch](#) with the current research and trends in optimized information architecture. Individual feedback from both users and website owners should also be included in the IA design strategy developmental stages of any web development project.